

## Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 INT-05

FEAE-00 CU-02 /101 W

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R 061430Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1920

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMCONSUL CURACAO

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 065

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BR, NS

SUBJECT: BRAZILIAN INFLUENCE IN SURINAM

REF: STATE 015350

1. SURINAM HAS BEEN POLITICALLY ORIENTED TOWARD THE NETHERLANDS AND ECONOMICALLY ORIENTED TOWARD THE US (ALCOA) AND WESTERN EUROPE. AS DUTCH-SPEAKING QUASI-COLONY, IT IS AN ANOMALY IN LATIN AMERICA WHOSE TIES WITH NEAR NEIGHBORS, EXCEPT NETHERLANDS ANTILLES, HAVE BEEN EPISODIC. MOST SURINAMERS, WHEN THEY THINK OF IT AT ALL, PERCEIVE BRAZIL AS REMOTE GIANT. BUT WARY REMARKS ABOUT BRAZIL'S SIZE (105 MILLION POPULATION) IN RELATION TO SURINAM'S (APPROXIMATELY 380,000), AND PROBLEMS THIS COULD POSE IN THE FUTURE, ARE SOMETIMES HEARD.

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WM THE BRAZILIAN AIRLINE, CRUZEIRO DO YUL, CALLS WEEKLY AND LLOYD BRASILEIRO SHIPS MONTHLY AT PARAMARIBO. CORVETTE AND PATROL BOATS OF THE BRAZILIANN AMAZONIAN FLEET SHOW FLAG IN SURINAMESE PORTS ABOUT TWICE A YEAR. OVERLAND COMMUNICATIONS WITH BRAZIL, HOWEVER, ARE VIRTUALLY NIL; DESPITE COMMON BORDER, EMPTY AMAZON DOMAIN SEVERELY HINDERS CONTACT BETWEEN DEVELOPED PORTIONS OF TWO COUNTRIES. THUS TRADE WITH BRAZIL (DOLS 1.3 MILLION IN 1972) AND BRAZILIAN INVESTMENT PRESENTLY UNIMPORTANT, ALTHOUGH BRAZILIAN INTERESTS HAVE PROPOSED TO GOS JOINT VENTURE FOR LARGE SUGAR GROWING AND PRODUCTION COMPLEX. PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE IS RARELY HEARD AND IS NOT OFFERED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. AND ONE-MAN BRAZILIAN CONSULATE AT PARAMARIBO IS NEITHER ACTIVE NOR INFLUENTIAL.

3. BUT SURINAM'S INSULARITY IS RAPIDLY BREAKING DOWN AS COUNTRY MOVES TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. COUNTRY'S POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ORIENTATION IS IN STATE OF FLUX. GOS IS HASTENING INEVITABLE DECLINE OF DUTCH INFLUENCE WITH CONCERTED EFFORT TO ELIMINATE COLONIAL TIES (EXCEPT AID) AND TO REPLACE THEM WITH REGIONAL MOORINGS APPROPRIATE TO COUNTRY'S SOON-TO-BE SOVEREIGN STATUS. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SPEAK OF JOINING REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS, REORIENTING TRADE TOWARD LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, EVEN ADOPTING NEW NATIONAL LANGUAGE IN PLACE OF DUTCH. IN THIS FLUID SITUATION, THERE ARE SHORT-TO MEDIUM-TERM OPPORTUNITIES IN SURINAM FOR EXPANSION-MINDED REGIONAL POWERS PREPARED TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT AID COMMITMENT. THUS FAR, ONLY VENEZUELA SEEMS PREPARED TO DO SO. TWO GOVERNMENTS RECENTLY CAME TO FAR-REACHING AGREEMENT ON EXCHANGE OF SURINAM BAUXITE FOR VENEZUELAN OIL, A LARGE VENEZUELAN CULTURAL CENTER IS IN THE WORKS, AND OTHER COOPERATIVE PROJECTS ARE LIKELY TO EMERGE FROM RECENT HIGHLY-PUBLICIZED STATE VISIT BY MINISTER-PRESIDENT HENCK ARRON TO CARACAS. BY CONTRAST, USG HAS SIGNIFIED THAT IT DOES NOT INTEND TO PROVIDE AID TO SURINAM. AND BRAZIL HAS MADE NO MOVE AS YET. AS RESULT, VENEZUELAN STOCK HAS BEEN RISING FAST, ALONG WITH POPULARITY OF SPANISH LANGUAGE, WHILE BRAZIL'S HAS REMAINED STATIC.

4. NEVERTHELESS, INTEREST IN BRAZIL IS ALSO ON INCREASE. ARRON IS EXPECTED TO VISIT BRASILIA LATER THIS YEAR FOR TOUR D'HORIZON WITH GOB. REFLECTING GROWING ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

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OF BRAZIL'S AMAZON REGION, GOVERNMENT-OWNED AIRLINE, SLM, INAUGURATED CARGO FLIGHTS BETWEEN PARAMARIBO AND MANAUS JANUARY 28. OVER LONGER TERM, DEVELOPMENT OF AMAZON FRONTIER IS LIKELY TO INCREASE BRAZIL'S STRATEGIC STAKE AND ECONOMIC PRESENCE IN THE GUIANAS, INCLUDING SURINAM. BRAZILIAN ROAD BEING BUILT PARALLEL WITH SURINAM'S SOUTHERN BORDER HAS ALREADY ENCOURAGED INVESTORS TO THINK OF ESTABLISHING CATTLE RANCH AT SIPALAWINI BORDER POINT AND SHIPPING CATTLE OUT VIA BRAZIL.

ULTIMATELY, WHEN AMAZON DEVELOPMENT IS WELL ADVANCED, THERE COULD BE RENEWED BRAZILIAN INTEREST IN BUILDING ROAD TO SEA THROUGH SURINAM. THUS, EVEN IF IT WANTED TO, SURINAM CANNOT ISOLATE ITSELF FROM BRAZIL.

5. US INTERESTS: US HAS AN IMPORTANT BUT NOT VITAL INTEREST IN PROTECTING AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN SURINAM BAUXITE INDUSTRY (APPROXIMATELY DOLS 350 MILLION) AND PRESERVING US ACCESS TO LOCAL BAUXITE. IN SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM, BOTH OF THESE OBJECTIVES ARE COMPATIBLE WITH INCREASING VENEZUELAN OR BRAZILIAN INFLUENCE IN SURINAM. INDEED, POLITICAL LEAD AND AID COMMITMENT BY EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE COUNTRIES WOULD REDUCE AID PRESSURES ON USG. AND CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH PRO-AMERICAN REGIONAL POWER WOULD ACT TO RESTRICT CUBAN AND COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN SURINAM OVER LONG TERM.

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